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ABSTRACT

Delta College, a community college in Michigan, utilized a vacant high school in Midland County as an off-campus, community based facility. With limited resources, the college transformed the school into an instructional site to serve students in their communities, enhance college visibility, and serve increasing enrollment. The establishment of the Delta College Midland Center required: (1) collaborating with community leaders and conducting needs assessments; (2) developing a handbook for faculty teaching at the center; (3) staffing beyond job descriptions; (4) contract services; (5) furnishings; (6) student services; (7) technology; (8) learning services; (9) collegiality; and (10) revenue enhancement. The purposes and functions of the Delta College Center are to provide community residents with access to educational services, a unique learning environment tailored to the community's needs, programs and services that develop potential and creativity as well as career training, a high quality teaching/learning environment, and formal and informal experiences promoting the social and cultural diversity of the community. The experience in the "Midland Model" will serve as a guide in the operation of additional college facilities, which are presently underway. (YKH)

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Establishing a Major Off-Campus Center: The Midlands Model

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"Establishing a Major Off-Campus Center: The Midland Model"

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ABSTRACT

Delta College, a community college in the east-central portion of Michigan, recently purchased a vacant high school and transformed it into an off-campus location in the span of a few weeks. The process of transforming this facility into a community-based center using limited resources will be discussed. Although the college now owned an off-campus facility, how could it best be used to fulfill the mission of the college? Topics will include student services, staffing, technology, faculty orientation, revenue enhancers, needs assessment/programs and contract services.

Delta College is a community college serving three counties in the east-central portion of Michigan. Enrollment at the college is currently 18,000; full-time equated students number about 7000.

Recently the college purchased a 26,000 sq ft. former girls school in Midland county as part of several initiatives designed to serve students in their communities, enhance college visibility and position the institution with more capacity to meet the needs of an expected 2,000 additional students by the end of the decade.

The college has been a presence in the Midland area for nearly 30 years and now it purchased a home and expects to be a significant presence in the community.

In a short span of six weeks, the college had to prepare the building for use as an instructional site.

This paper describes the process of transforming a vacant high school into a college and community-based facility using limited resources. Although the college now owned an off-campus facility, how could it best be used to fulfill the mission of the college?

In order to begin developing a plan for the center, several

college groups and community members from local schools, libraries and business were invited to the center to draft a vision statement for the facility.

Using a variety of demographic materials from the ccoolege and from the local chamber of commerce and Ameritech. several basic questions were addressed:

How do we effecively identify the educational needs of the community?

What should be the role of area business and industry in the educational offerings? Other colleges and Universities?

What kind of technology should be available and how pervasive should it be?

Does the college want a full range of student services?

How does the college market the educational program?

Does the college have faculty, staff and other resources to fulfill our role?

If the college is in the business of quality, how can the college provide the necessary programs/services within the framework of budget and staff limitations?

Although many more questions were asked, the college answered the challenge and the Delta College Midland Cenetr became a reality.

The process of putting the facility on-line required a variety of basic applications which also served as recommendations for future expansion. Specifically:

1) Collaborating with community leaders and conducting needs assessments - Although an ongoing process, a primary focus of the Midland center is to complement business programs offered by with area universities. (2+2. 3+1 arrangements) A consortium of all educational institutions offering programs in the Midland area, including Adult and Community Education, meets on a regular basis to exchange program ideas and enhance educational offerings. A combined schedule is published each semester detailing courses offered by all of the institutions.

2) Developing a handbook for faculty teaching at the center - All faculty teaching at the center during the initial start-up period were invited to the facility for a tour and general orientation. They were given a handbook which described services available to them as well as information about the building such as maps, emergency

procedures and accessing audio-visual equipment.

3) Staffing Beyond Job Descriptions - The Midland Center is one of 30 off-campus locations that offer classes to students. There is no administrator assigned to this facility on a full-time basis. The facility is managed by a full-time administrative secretary during the day and a part-time administrative secretary during evening hours. This staffing pattern is supplemented by three student workers. The staff is committed to accomodating the needs of all guests at the center and never hesitates to perform tasks outside of the traditional position description. This dedication to service reinforces a positive attitude from anyone visiting the center.

4) Contract Services - The Midland Center is 18 miles from the main campus of Delta College. It is more cost effective to outsource certain services rather than utilize campus employees. General maintainence, heating/air conditioning, lawn care, snow removal and boiler services are bid on an annual basis. This also provided another opportunity for the college and area business to work together.

5) Furnishings - Although the center was equipped with tables and chairs in all 13 classrooms at the time of purchase, it was necessary to arrange for the delivery and set-up of faculty/staff work stations, first aid equipment, copy machine, FAX, mailboxes, telephones, patio furniture for the courtyard and a cadre of basic audio-visual equipment.

6) Student Services - Initially no student services were available at the center. In subsequent semesters, a representative from Student Services began visiting the center on a rotating basis and is available to meet with students and faculty concerning, admissions, financial aid, advising, financial aid and career preparation. Special workshops are offered on an as needed basis.

7) Technology - In order to meet the technological needs of students at the center, a computer lab was constructed at the Midland Center utilizing machines from a campus upgrading project. This allowed for the availability of computer assisted instruction and open lab time for students. Technicians from the main campus regularly service the equipment.

   Planning is now underway for the construction of a two-way interactive classroom facility which will offer classes and services to out students.

8) Learning Services - Although resources are not available to equip a library, access to limited library service is available through a modem.

A staff member from the college's Teaching/Learning Center has been assigned to the Midland Center on a part-time basis. Services offered include tutoring assistance and make-up testing. Assistance is available on days of highest facility utilization.

9) Collegiality - Since the facility functions as a mini-campus, faculty, staff, and students have readily developed a sense of community at the center. Foreign language luncheons, group studying and mid-semester band concerts are all part of the environment at the Midland Center.

10) Revenue Enhancers - There are opportunities to rent space to non-profit groups and area businesses. The college has been careful to avoid competing with local conference facilities. However, as more individuals visit the center, they can see the benefits that the college brings to the community. Recently space was rented to a child care provider that is also reviewing the possibilty of offering their services to college students while they attend class at the center.

The effectiveness of the Delta College Midland Center will be measured against the Mission Statement for all Delta College Centers which reads:

Delta College Centers provide high quality educational opportunities promoting and supporting the mission, values and goals of the college.

Delta College Centers serve as "partners" with the local communities. As a partner, Delta College interacts with the communities to identify educational needs and develop educational resources to enhance the quality of life for members of those communities.

Included in the purposes and functions of Delta College Centers is a committment of the college to:

* Provide residents of the communities convenient access to comparable (main Campus) educational services

* Provide residents of the communities the opportunity to begin college in a learning environment that is designed to meet the unique needs of each community.

* Provide programs and services assisting students in developing their potential and creativity as well as attaining skills adequate to the demands of their career goals.

* Provide a high quality teaching/learning environment for

students

* Provide formal and informal experinces promoting the social and cultural diversity of the Delta College community.

The experiences in the "Midland Model" will serve as a guide in the operation of additional college facilities. Other college site acquisitions include the renovation of a vacant shopping mall/conference center and the construction of a planetarium/science center in neighboring communities.

Establishing a Major Off-Campus Center: The Midland Model"

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The college has been a presence in the Midland area for nearly 30 years and now it purchased a home and expects to be a significant presence in the community.

In a short span of six weeks, the college had to prepare the building for use as an instructional site.

The presentation will describe the process of transforming a vacant high school into a college and community-based facility using limited financial resources. Although the college now owned an off-campus facility, how could it best be used to fulfill the mission of the college?

In order to begin developing a plan for the center, several college groups and community members were brought together to draft a vision statement for the facility. From that point, several basic questions were analyzed:

How do we effectively identify the educational needs of the community?

What should be the role of area business and industry in in the educational offerings?

What kind of technology and how pervasive should it be?

Does the college want a full range of services?

How do we market the educational offerings?

Does the college have faculty, staff and other resources to fulfill our role?

If we are in the business of quality, how can the college provide the necessary programs/services within the framework of budget and staff limitations?

Although many more questions were asked, the college answered the challenge and the Delta College Midland Center became a reality.

The presentation will highlight the process of putting a new facility "on line".

Specific details and practical recommendations will include:

1) Collaborating with community leaders and conducting needs assessements

2) The advantages of contracting building services

3) Developing a handbook for faculty orientation at the facility

4) Rotating Student Services

5) Staffing beyond job descriptions

6) What about child care for your students?

7) Generating revenue/rental to community groups and business

8) Furnishings beyond tables, desks and chairs

9) Managing a computer lab with limited resources

10) Developing collegiality among students in a campus - like environment

11) Planning a two-way interactive classroom

12) Tutoring services

As the administrator of this facility as well as overseeing over thirty other locations. I have the experience to assist others in the planning and operation off-campus facilities

Other college site acquisitions include the renovation of a vacant shopping mall and the construction of a planetarium/ science center in nearby communities. The experiences in the "Midland Model" will serve as a guide in the operation of these facilities.